

Fluorescent Light Disposal Tips

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FLUORESCENT BULB INFORMATION

Fluorescent bulbs include compact fluorescent lights (CFLs), high intensity discharge (HID) lamps, bug zappers, tanning lamps, black lights neon lights and other non-incandescent bulbs which may contain mercury. The bulbs may be tubes, circular or U-shaped.

Fluorescent bulbs are generally safe to use and last five to ten times longer than standard incandescent bulbs. They are also very energy efficient and save energy costs. In fact, new federal legislation proposes phasing out of standard bulbs by 2015 requiring the use of more fluorescents in the future.



WHERE DO I DISPOSE OF FLUORESCENT BULBS?

It is illegal to dispose of fluorescent bulbs in the trash in Minnesota. State Statutes 115A.932 limits disposal options to household hazardous waste collection or recycling facilities. Go to www.hennepin.us and type "Drop Off Facility" in the search box to find the one nearest you. Hennepin County will take up to 25 lamps per year from households. They do not charge for disposal.

In addition, during the annual **Clean Up** in June, the City will take the first ten fluorescents brought in for disposal at no charge.

If you have additional bulbs,

please check with your local hardware store or other fluorescent retailers to see if they will take back old bulbs and to see if they charge a fee.

HOW DO I SAFELY STORE AND TRANSPORT BULBS?

Please transport bulbs in a way to avoid breakage and exposure to mercury. Pack them in original packaging or wrap in newspaper or bubble wrap. Please do **NOT** place tape on the lamps. Place them in a trash bag for transport.

It is **OK** to throw standard incandescent bulbs and halogen bulbs in the trash as they don't contain mercury. If you have a question, call Hennepin County at 612-348-3777.

WHAT IF A FLUORESCENT LAMP BREAKS?

First off, don't panic. Although the bulbs do contain mercury, which is toxic, you can clean up and dispose of a single bulb with proper precautions. If more than one breaks, call for help at 800-422-0798, day or night.

First, it is the **vapor** that is of concern. Open the windows to ventilate the area at least 15 minutes. Then put on disposable gloves, such as latex gloves you use for painting or household chores. When you purchase fluorescent bulbs plan on having some handy just in case.

Scoop up glass shards and any residue with stiff paper, an eyedropper or spoons. Use sticky tape and wet paper towels to blot up small shards and residue. Remove and dispose of any clothes or shoes that picked up mercury and place them in the trash also. Now you can vacuum. Ventilate during and after vacuuming.

Place everything used in a plastic trash bag, seal it and place inside another bag and seal it again (duct tape works good). Store outside until taken to the hazard-

ous waste drop off listed above. Then take a shower!

Never use a vacuum cleaner first as this will heat up the mercury and it will become a **vapor**. Brooms may break it into smaller pieces too difficult to clean up on your own. If you vacuum or sweep it up first you may need to dispose of them also.

For more complete information go to www.pca.state.mn.us and type "fluorescent" in the search box to find their publication.